Canadian Society For Ukrainian Labour Research

CSULR Symposium

"Forgotten Legacy"

Contribution of Socialist Ukrainians to Canada

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Society for Ukrainian Labour Research (CSULR) together with co-sponsors Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (AUUC) and Workers Benevolent Association (WBA) hosted a symposium in Winnipeg, Manitoba October 25-26, 1996. The symposium titled "Forgotten Legacy: Contribution of Socialist Ukrainian Canadians to Canada" was very successful in terms of attendance and breadth of participation, involving academic, cultural, ethnic, museum, musical, business and archival representatives.

The format of the symposium consisted of five sessions each with a moderator and panelists. It soon became apparent that the women panelists were getting the interest and attention of the symposium. This prompted the CSULR to issue a special brochure of six women presenters. These presentations while in the form of personal reminiscences nevertheless gave a good insight into the activities of the respective organizations that the women participated in. The symposium accomplished what it set out to do, namely to show the role and contributions of people who participated in their quest for social justice, people who were in their convictions, socialists.

ALICE BILECKI

As a child I remember attending the Russian Orthodox Church in Lachine, Quebec in which I had been christened, but when the Ukrainian language school opened in a small house on 10th Avenue in the city, sponsored by the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association, my mother enrolled me. A few years later I entered the Ukrainian Dancing School led by Mr. Grekul. The ULFTA had to rent a vacant store to accommodate the school, which included adults, teenagers and children. After the Ukrainian Labour Temple was built in Lachine, I took mandolin lessons from Mr. Petrashek, later I joined the Mandolin Orchestra at Prince Arthur Hall in Montreal. Each Sunday morning I travelled by street car from Lachine to Montreal for orchestra rehearsals. We participated in many activities in Montreal and Lachine. An outstanding event in the twenties was that our orchestra gave concerts in the cities of Trois-Rivieres and Shawinigan Falls, in the province of Quebec, for the first time. Previously, our concerts were held in the Montreal district only.

Though active in all cultural aspects of the ULFTA, I only became a member of the Youth Section in 1932 and became active in that organization for young people. In the twenties, the ULFTA grew in membership, with many events held annually - picnics, bazaars, concerts, dramas, etc. Then in 1929, just as I graduated from Miss Graham's Business College in Montreal, the economic crash came - the Great Depression. It was a difficult time for jobs. Being unable to get a steady secretarial job, I worked as a waitress, took a job at Seagrams Distillery in LaSalle, Quebec, and even worked as a maid. That was the fate of the young generation at that time. You took any job you could get. Three years later, I did get a steady position as a secretary at the Dominion Engineering Company in Lachine.

The thirties was a period of great unrest in Europe and the world. Hitler was on the move. The Soviet Union campaigned in the League of Nations for a collective security pact to stop Hitler, but got no support from the other nations. Members of the ULFTA became ardent anti-fascists and supported the Soviet Union policy. For this we were depicted as "red" by the press, and some members, fearing for their jobs, dropped their membership in the Association.

By this time there was another great problem to contend with in Quebec. Just as I was preparing to leave Montreal for Winnipeg in 1937, to marry Anthony Bilecki who was working for the People's Gazette (the only daily on the

American continent in the Ukrainian language at the time), Premier Maurice Duplessis' police padlocked the Ukrainian hall in Montreal, devastating the membership there. The organization resurfaced, but this set it back.

In Winnipeg, my husband and I were members of the ULFTA and the Workers Benevolent Association. The 1930s brought tremendous changes in Europe with Hitler marching through countries unopposed. Finally, on September 1, 1939, when Hitler invaded Poland, the British government declared war on Germany on September 3. On September 10 Canada followed suit. In January, 1940, the Canadian Government passed an Order in Council under the War Measures Act, which gave it the power to arrest and detain people without having to lay charges or hold trials. On June 1, 1940, the ULFTA was declared illegal and its property confiscated. A number of other organizations, including the Communist Party of Canada, were also declared illegal. Because of rumours of impending arrests of leaders of the organization, it was decided that I, together with my ten month old son and husband's sister who lived with us, should return to our families in Montreal and Lachine, which we did in June.

In the middle of July, I received a letter from Winnipeg that my husband had been arrested on July 6 together with 18 other leaders in Winnipeg. Though we knew this could happen, it still came as a great shock. My husband was arrested under Section 21 of the Defense of Canada Regulations. No charges were laid, and he was never brought to trial. After a day of interrogation by the RCMP, he and the other 18 were taken to Headingley Jail, and two day later, shackled on the ankles and wrists, they were put on a train to Kananaskis Concentration Camp in the foothills of Alberta. In Kananaskis, they put each Canadian anti-fascist in a hut with eleven German and Italian enemy aliens. They were refused a separate hut.

A week later, in Lachine, the RCMP raided my parents' home where I was staying with my small son. My parents were not members of any organization, but that did not matter. The police came away with nothing, but it was a traumatic experience for my parents. Now it became imperative that I find work, and in a short time, I did. It was war time, and I was able to get a position as secretary in an engineering firm in Montreal, and it was decided that I move to Montreal with my son, to my husband's family there. We were fortunate that both our families were very supportive and helped us in every way they could during this trying period.

The Ukrainian organization had survived the turmoil in Montreal and Lachine. The ULFTA members supported the war effort throughout the war years. My mother-in-law was one of the activists in the hall in Montreal. I attended affairs of the organization whenever possible, but the main focus at this time, for women whose husbands were incarcerated in concentration camps, was the National Committee for Democratic Rights, which was formed to fight for the release of our men, wrongfully arrested and detained in Kananaskis and Petawawa. This was a time of petitions, collection of money for parcels to send to our husbands, to obtaining reference letters from prominent people who attested to the good character of my husband. I was able to visit the Mayor of Lachine and the Rev. Patterson of the United Church in Lachine to request them to write for the release of my husband, as well as Rev. Katsounoff of Montreal, which they did. I have a file of letters written by me to the Right Hon. Ernest Lapointe, Minister of Justice, in Ottawa, and other officials concerning matters that came up during those years.

Finally, in August 1941, the anti-fascists, 100 of them now, were separated from the Germans and Italians and put in Hull Jail, Quebec. Things eased somewhat for them. They did not have to contend with fascist remarks and threats. The National Committee for Democratic Rights stepped up its campaign for visitation rights for the women and children of internees. In September, the Montreal branch decided to send a delegation of wives to Ottawa. It was on a Friday, and halfway there, the car broke down and we decided to hitch hike the rest of the way, but arrived too late to see any officials. The next day we decided to go to Hull jail, but were told by the Commandant of the jail that he had no jurisdiction to allow visits. As we left the jail, on the spur of the moment, we decided to go around to the back of the jail. Our men saw us on the grounds, and a demonstration ensued with them shouting and singing to us. The guards were alerted and came towards us with bayonets drawn, and we were told to leave. However, this caused much excitement for our husbands and ourselves, and we did get visitation rights a month later. I was able to visit my husband with my now two-year-old son for 10 months. The conditions were: one-half hour a month in the presence of a guard, and to speak in English or French only, but it was something to look forward to each month, and we were glad that we had achieved this small victory. My husband came home to us at the end of September, 1942, to Lachine where we were now living with my parents. He had been incarcerated for two years, three months, without cause. He subsequently joined the armed forces and trained in Farnham, Quebec.

After the war, in 1947, we returned to Winnipeg. We now had a daughter as well as a son. In Winnipeg we became active as a family in the Association of Ukrainian Canadians (the new name change for the ULFTA) and the Workers Benevolent Association. My husband became president of the WBA and remained its president for over 40 years.

Though our organizations had many outstanding festivals, operettas, concerts and dramas throughout the years, one festival that stands out for me was the Festival of 1956 when we put on the Bukovinian Wedding Operetta in the Winnipeg Arena. One thousand participants took part in the choir, orchestra and dances. The children played a special role as well, and the finale was most spectacular when a carriage drawn by two horses carried the bride and groom away. The scene has remained indelibly in my mind.

But combined with the spectacle of the Bukovinian Wedding, another very important affair took place at that time - the opening of the Ivan Franko Museum and Library, and the unveiling of a monument dedicated to Ivan Franko, a great Ukrainian writer, poet and humanitarian. Ivan Franko, in the short period of his 60 years, wrote 6,000 works of prose, poems, dramas, and literary works. The Museum and Library were first located in a converted house at 603 Pritchard Avenue, next to the WBA building, and the monument, in a park beside it. At the dedication, Pritchard Avenue was blocked off to accommodate the throngs of people present. The person working tirelessly to establish the Museum and Library, and maintaining it for 36 years, was my late husband, Anthony Bilecki. The Museum and Library are now located in the Ivan Franko Manor, and a larger monument to Ivan Franko is located in its courtyard. It is a beautiful museum, and for the last twenty-five years during Folklorama, people from all over the world have visited the Museum, signed its guest book, and praised it in their remarks. Canadians have been amazed when they discovered what a treasure we have. This is part of our legacy that we are proud to pass on to the future Canadian generations.

NADYA NIECHODA

Long before my father had decided to emigrate to Canada in 1929, knowingly or not, his outlook on life was that of a socialist. Long before he came to Canada, he divorced himself from the church, which he felt was as big an oppressor of the poor peasantry as was the Polish aristocracy. Reluctantly, he had allowed my mother to christen me. I was the last child born in Poland, and it was only the pleading of my grandmother that changed his mind. When my mother and three of us children joined my father in Winnipeg in 1930, the first place that my father brought us to, was the Ukrainian Labour Temple at the corner of Pritchard and McGregor streets. I was one and a half years old.

From that time to the present, my life has been closely knit with the progressive Ukrainian movement in Canada - and also with the Russian progressive movement. The latter was due to the fact that most of the immigrants coming from the Volyn area considered themselves Russian, having served in the tsarist army. Consequently, I grew up with no nationalistic tendencies, Ukrainian being my first language and years later, learning Russian.

To fully understand the role this Ukrainian Labour Temple played in the lives of many immigrant families like ours, one must also understand the time of the 30's. Unlike immigrants arriving in Canada today who receive a great deal of assistance from government agencies in learning the English language and in learning to become Canadians, we did not receive this kind of treatment. We were not encouraged to become Canadians, there was no assistance, there was much discrimination with which I became acquainted at a very early age. We immigrants were drawn to this Ukrainian organization firstly, because it was not a religious grouping and secondly, we were accepted here. It was here that many of our parents, most of whom were illiterate, learned to read and write their own tongue and it was here that we learned of our culture - we learned our songs, our poetry, our dances and our cultural traditions. It was here that our people developed a social consciousness and it was through this organization that they joined in the struggles of the Canadian masses, a struggle for relief, for jobs, for medical assistance and for food itself.

From a very early age I was introduced to the massive demonstrations held in Market Square - demonstrations by the unemployed, by Canadians who were against the invasion of China by Japan, by Canadians who saw the need to defeat fascism in Spain. I remember vividly the tremendous May Day parades - May

Day not a communist holiday, but an American workers' holiday in their struggle for an eight hour day.

Soon after our arrival in Canada, we, as a family, attended concerts and dramas in this hall. We listened to choirs, the orchestras, and watched in awe as the dancers performed. My mother used to tell me how I used to sit on the bottom stair and play a make-believe mandolin on a broom, and sing *The International* when I was about three years of age.

When I started public school, I was also enrolled in Ukrainian school. Twice a week we attended classes, learned to read and write. My teacher was Mykyta Krechmarowsky. Speaking Ukrainian was no problem, some of my friends could not speak in English. Soon, we were reading poems by Shevchenko and Franko. We learned Ukrainian songs, much to the joy of our parents, and perhaps we did not appreciate it at the time, but much to the enrichment of our lives.

While in Ukrainian school we also studied the history of Ukraine and the Soviet Union. We learned and discussed current events. We became aware of local and world affairs. Once, we were shown slides of the Spanish War, and a slide was shown of a little girl standing by an unexploded bomb which was much bigger than she was. I cried all the way home because children like me were being destroyed by such big bombs. This encouraged me to collect pennies in aid of Spanish orphans, much later, during the second World War, as a teenager I collected money for orphans in Vietnam, in Central America, and for the Chernobyl victims in Ukraine and Belarus. To this day I have an abhorrence to war - to the destruction of man by man. I have throughout my life taken part in the struggle for peace on this planet which was spearheaded by our organization.

When I was about seven years old, my dad brought home a mandolin which he had bought for $2.00, and he said, "U suboty idesh hraty" (on Saturday, you will go and play). The following Saturday, I went to the hall for my first music lesson. There were many of us young children, and soon we became an orchestra just like the big girls. Soon I was able to play the *International* on a real mandolin, though that did not stop me from playing *Rock of Ages or Swanee River*, and Ukrainian folk songs. How fortunate it was for me and the others that we were able to learn and study music at a time when it was so difficult for us to even survive. A love for music and songs was instilled in us, and I am sure most of us cherish that love and enjoyment of music to this day. Our children's orchestra was soon able to participate in concerts and we even played at funerals

which were held in this hall. We travelled to the countryside to play for the farmers.

You have heard how single men were deported during the 1930's. In 1937 our family was notified by the immigration authorities that we were to be deported to Poland. The reason for this was that my father was a burden to the state because he was on relief as there were no jobs. Fortunately for us, it was the people from this organization, supported by similar organizations, who launched a campaign so that the deportation order be rescinded. My father, who had finally found a job in a garment factory, was arrested on the job by immigration officers. The rest of our family scattered throughout Winnipeg like mice, so as not to be caught together for deportation. This whole frightening procedure took over three months, during which I was not in contact with any members of my family. I was fortunate that one of the members of this organization looked after me during those frightening days. It was my stay with Olga and Trifon Tzurkalenko that left a lasting impression on me. The Tzurkalenkos had books in their house, amongst which I first saw, "What is To Be Done?". There was a radio, and I learned to listen to the news. It was here that I learned etiquette and personal hygiene, and how to set a table. It was here that I learned and tried to understand why we had to be deported. Olga Tzurkalenko was a leader in the progressive Ukrainian organization, a very talented and intelligent woman, who had taken part in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. I am grateful to Olga and Trifon for their progressive thinking and for sharing this with me, a young child. This never left me. Finally, my dad was released and we were allowed to remain in Canada. We, as a family, appeared on the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press, in May of 1937. We began to normalize our life, which was no small task, because we had lost everything. We had no place to live. Again, it was the people from this organization and from other similar groups who helped us find a place to live, collected furniture, clothing and food for our family. I can never forget this, and am grateful to our organization, to the People's Co-op, to the CPC, UJPO, Maxim Gorky clubs for whatever aid they gave our family.

This Ukrainian Labour Temple was a home to many of us growing up in the north end of Winnipeg. It was here we gathered for Ukrainian dancing, for orchestra, for Junior and Youth Club activities, for crafts and singing and music. This was our community centre where we were also taught to be good Canadian citizens, a credit to our parents and organization. It was here that we learned how to conduct a meeting, how to keep minutes, how to speak in public. This came to good stead for me in later life, when I became a shop steward of our office union,

and when I was president of our PTA, protesting the cutbacks in education by the Social Credit government in 1972.

Looking back through my first Ukrainian BUKVAR, there is a picture of a weeping mother surrounded by children. This picture was titled "Unemployment". That scene was common to all of us at that time, and one that has haunted me throughout my life. In another Ukrainian reader, we learned about Canada, its first inhabitants, stories of the war and horror it brings, and we learned about the development of socialism in the USSR. However very important is the fact that this organization was instrumental in educating our parents about Canada, and educating us children about the homeland of our parents. Both the BUKVAR and the first CHYTANKA were compiled by Philip Lysets.

This was one of the strengths of the progressive Ukrainian organization at a time when it was not popular to be left wing. Many members paid dearly for this. Canadian citizenship was denied to them. Some of our parents never became Canadian citizens. I lived in Canada for forty-five years before I was able to obtain Canadian citizenship.

What we must remember is that the left wing movement in Canada, in which we were involved, was instrumental in bettering the lives of thousands upon thousands of Canadian farmers and workers. Many of our members were active in the demands of the unemployed during the 30's. It is because of this struggle that we enjoy many social benefits today - things which we now take for granted - Medicare, pensions, 8-hour working day, unemployment insurance, trade union rights.

In my mind, these were not subversive activities. However, when the Ukrainian Labour Temple was padlocked in 1940, the leadership arrested and our newspapers closed down, as an eleven-year-old child I was devastated. How could someone close down our wonderful hall? What were we to do? Where would we spend our time? When I had to walk past the hall during those days, I crossed the street, turning my face away from the hall.

Left or right - these terms were known to me from childhood:- Left to me was good; right - was the authorities sending my dad to work in a relief camp, left - was the hall; right - was that it was taken from its rightful owners and given to Ukrainian nationalists; left - was the struggle of parents and thousands of others

for jobs, security, for education and social justice; right - was a deportation order for our family; right - was the denial of Canadian citizenship to those who built this hall and who carried on activities which touched thousands upon thousands of Canadians who were then and still are good citizens in this country. People who are responsible individuals, who through their own labour educated their children to become teachers, doctors, lawyers, and respected members of the Canadian community.

I am proud of the thousands of poorly educated and/or illiterate Ukrainian peasants who arrived in Canada to build a better life for themselves and their children, of those who passed through our Ukrainian Labour Temples across Canada and, in so doing, built a better Canada for all of us.

I was employed by the Vancouver Ukrainska Knyha for thirty years. At the present time, I am president of the Vancouver branch of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians. I administer the Lesya Ukrainka Manor which was built by the AUUC in cooperation with the B.C. Housing Management Commission and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This complex is for seniors, adjacent to the Ukrainian Cultural Centre at 805 East Pender Street which was constructed by volunteer labour and donations in 1928.

To this day I continue to participate in the activities of the AUUC, continuing the programs established by our forefathers. We continue to have cultural performing groups - the Jubilee Choir, the Vancouver Folk Orchestra, the Dovbush and Druzhba Dancers, a School of Dancing - where our cultural heritage is transmitted to the third and fourth generations of Canadian Ukrainians for the enjoyment of all Canadians in this multi-cultural country.

We have a fine and proud history, and I am pleased to be part of it.

This symposium has re-enforced my belief firstly in our progressive Ukrainian community in Canada, and secondly, in a Socialist Canada, in spite of the events which have transpired in the former Soviet Union.

MARY PROKOP

I am grateful to our hosts for this invitation to share my experiences with you. Please forgive the written form, but at this stage in life, I find it difficult to express myself concisely, especially under the pressure of time.

First of all, a little background. I am a first generation Ukrainian Canadian, my parents having come to Canada at the turn of the century, settling finally in Slawa, not far from Myrnam (Alberta). Pioneer life was hard. We had to contend with crop failure, debts, seizure of our property, lack of medical care (one of my brothers died for lack of care), primitive education, continual poverty. Perhaps all this predisposed me to joining the progressive, left wing Ukrainian organizations.

Living with my married sister Annie in St. Paul (Alberta) during the Great Depression in the early 1930s, I read the newspaper, *Farmers' Life*, the *Edmonton Bulletin* and *The Worker*. From them, I was getting opposing views of what was happening in Canada and throughout the world. Closer to home, two events had a profound effect on me and led me to the organization.

The first was the Hunger March of farmers and unemployed workers to Edmonton in December, 1932. Instead of receiving sympathy and redress, the United Farmers of Alberta government ordered the RCMP and local police to smash the demonstration.

The second event was the Farmers Grain Strike, the first of its kind in Canada, which took place in the Myrnam area from November 1933 to March 1934. A Strike Committee was elected - four from the Ukrainian nationalist organizations, two from the Farmers' Unity League and two from the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association. The basic demands were proper grading of grain, removal of cheating grain agents and for government investigation of farmers' grievances.

Some of the leaders of the nationalist organizations, the clergy and their newspapers *Ukrainian Voice*, *New Pathway* and *Ukrainian News* branded the strike as communist inspired and organized, calling on farmers not to support it. *Farmers' Life*, members and sympathizers of left wing organizations and the majority of farmers, even from the nationalist organizations decided to put aside their ideological and religious differences and did everything possible to win the

strike. It was truly a united action, supported by farmers from eighty-four localities. In March, 1934, after almost four months of struggle, the farmers demands were met. Never before or since has such unity been achieved amongst Ukrainian Canadians.

Because these actions in defense of people's livelihoods were so staunchly supported by the ULFTA and the Workers Benevolent Association, I felt that as a farmer's daughter, I belonged in the ranks of these organizations.

I became involved in provincial and federal elections in 1935, working for the federal Communist party candidate in the Vegreville riding, Matthew Popowich. Besides meeting him, I also met John Boychuk and Matthew Shatulsky. All three were national leaders of the ULFTA and WBA.

In December, 1935, I was asked to move to Winnipeg to work for the ULFTA. This I gladly accepted. During the next four years, I attended a six-month ULFTA higher educational course for organizational teachers and organizers. I married and worked with the Women's Section as a district organizer and helped in the national office. At that time, the Women's Section had forty branches and the journal *Working Woman* under its care. Much activity was directed towards education of women, particularly to eliminating illiteracy in Ukrainian and teaching at least elementary English. All this was in addition to cultural and social work throughout the organization, in each of its then 112 labour temples.

However, we did not lock ourselves up in our halls. We actively participated in the struggles of the working people, especially the unemployed, for jobs and relief, medical care and pensions. We demonstrated against fascism and war, against Section 98 of the Criminal Code, against the Padlock Law in Duplessis Quebec. When required, we women, together with the men, walked the picket lines.

For these activities, we paid dearly. The Ukrainian nationalist organizations did not involve themselves in the people's struggles as we did. So in the eyes of the authorities and employers, they were the good guys; we were the bad ones. They chose to support the Liberal and Conservative Parties. Their leaders and their press spread negative propaganda and attacks against the Soviet Union and Ukraine, as did the capitalists and their media, with the support of our government. We, on the other hand, supported the Communist Party because it was leading the struggles of the working people. Its members often went to jail

for defending the workers. We understood the Soviet Union and Ukraine as workers' and peasants' states and defended them as such. Add to this the baggage of old country politics on both sides. So a stone wall was built up between the two sections of the Ukrainian community in Canada. I hope that some day, especially now that we all support the same independent Ukraine, that that wall, as the one in Berlin, will tumble down. Hopefully, together with all the Humpty Dumpties.

For our organization, the labour movement and me personally, the Cold War came early. On January 11, 1940, the federal government amended the Defense of Canada Regulations to give itself the powers to detain people without charge or trial. On June 6, an Order in Council declared the Communist Party and a number of organizations, including the ULFTA, illegal. At the same time, ULFTA property - its buildings and press - were confiscated.

Under the War Measures Act, Canadian citizens - confirmed anti-fascists and labour leaders - were labeled "enemy aliens" and "enemies of the state", and interned as "prisoners of war". With the stroke of a pen by the Minister of Justice, Canada became a police state. It was not Parliament that ruled, but the Minister of Justice and the RCMP.

At 5:00 a.m. on July 6, 1940, my husband and I were jarred out of bed by loud banging at the door. When I opened it, four husky Mounties burst in and arrested my husband and searched the apartment. That day in Winnipeg, many similar raids were made, and women and children terrorized.

All told, thirty-two Ukrainians throughout the country were interned. Well that was some blow to our organization. Thirty-two leading activists who were needed to mobilize the people for the war effort were locked away, buildings where our people needed to meet were handed over to our adversaries, many of whom had supported Hitler and placed their hopes in him prior to the War, or were locked up. It was a peculiar situation - sons in Canadian uniforms, sent to fight and die, while their fathers were locked behind barbed wire as "prisoners of war".

A campaign, and I was in the thick of it, was immediately launched, initially by us, the wives of the interned and then by the National Council for Democratic Rights. It was difficult to mobilize people because we couldn't get media exposure. We were censored and isolated. It was only after the Soviet Union

became an ally that an intensive struggle by trade unions, church people, some elected officials and ourselves, that the last of the interned were finally released in September, 1942. In October, 1943 the ban on the ULFTA was lifted and after another two years of struggle our labour temples were returned in April, 1945, and compensation of sorts paid for those which had been sold.

We women and others of the ULFTA were active also in the war effort, raising funds, supporting war bond drives, our cultural groups entertaining the troops in training. Of particular note was the Red Cross campaign to raise $500,000 for medicines for the Red Army. We took on a quota of $100,000 and actually turned over $132,000. Considering that our branches across Canada also turned funds over directly, our contribution was even greater. In various aid efforts throughout the war years, the ULFTA raised well over half a million dollars.

Since the end of the war, the progressive Ukrainian Canadian left has been involved in many humanitarian, peace and solidarity actions, both in Canada and internationally. Our women were always, in the forefront of these struggles, whether to raise money and goods for the immediate post-war orphans of Ukraine, or our recent medical aid for the Chernobyl children in Cuba. I can truthfully say that our organization would not have gained such broad recognition as it has in the left and general community in Canada, in Ukraine, Cuba and elsewhere, were it not for the tremendous role of our women. Our role in every field of activity, in my opinion, is irreplaceable - in cultural work, maintaining our labour temples, catering, collecting funds for the organization and its press, to mention just a few. Reminiscences of one hundred and forty-four of our women activists were published in *Zhinochi Doli* in 1973, to mark the 50th anniversary of ULFTA\AUUC Women's Branches. This is now available in English translation as *Reminiscences of Courage and Hope.*

In conclusion, I would like to note that in 1976 we also published an *Almanac* in honour of International Women's Year. In it was written that the publication was a "mark of sincere recognition of the special contribution of AUUC women in the general efforts of humankind for progress, equality, human dignity, peace and friendship amongst peoples".

STELLA SEYCHUK

By way of introduction, I am a Canadian born person who literally grew up in the Ukrainian labour temple hall since 1921. After public school hours, almost all of my time was taken up attending Ukrainian language school, the school of folk dancing, the mandolin orchestra, the Junior and later the Youth section of the ULFTA. Matthew Popowich was our teacher. This was my upbringing.

My father believed that the harsh homesteading conditions should be replaced by a more humane and dignified way of life, and after arriving in Winnipeg, joined those who embarked on building this Ukrainian Labour Temple, became its member and helped in digging the foundation. My father's belief became my belief and I have belonged continuously to both co-sponsoring organizations, since childhood.

I have held executive positions at almost all local levels, have been elected to the national bodies of both organizations and have acted in the capacity of National Treasurer of The Workers Benevolent Association. I have attended two Canadian Youth Congresses in Montreal in 1937 and 1940, attended the World Congress for Peace and Disarmament in Moscow in 1962 and the World Congress in Berlin that launched the decade for equality, development and peace by the International Women's Democratic Federation in 1975. Consequently, I have strong convictions that the work undertaken by both co-sponsoring organizations, including the role of its women members was positive and definitely helped to broaden the social awareness of Canadians generally, and guide their activity towards the improvement of daily living standards.

Since I have been a long time employee of the WBA, I will direct some of my remarks to that particular area. It must be stressed that women were an integral part of the actions undertaken by both organizations. A correlation of activity between the women of the organizations became more evident with the formation of Women's Branches (ULTA) in March 1922 (of which my grandmother was a founding member), and the formation of the WBA in October 1922. Of the 207 applicants accepted into the WBA by the end of the year, 54 were women - a courageous step, considering there were no women's progressive movements in the Ukrainian community at that time. The prevailing sentiment was to brand us "Bolsheviks", that is, those participating in activities at the Ukrainian Labour Temple.

When I commenced my employment at the WBA in 1933, there was a court case in progress for alleged mismanagement. The records and books were seized by then attorney-general, W.G. Major of the Manitoba government. When the charges were found to be unwarranted, and the books finally returned, the intimidating effects were felt. This was during the depression years when mass protest actions were a feature of the day. Raids, arrests, beating of workers, infiltration of labour organizations were commonplace. Inevitably all this led to a loss of membership because of fear, red baiting, discrimination, threats of deportation - not wanting to be involved in public actions, but all leading to a sharper clarity of political viewpoints.

The activity of women in the WBA and ULFTA was conducted along parallel lines and was indivisible. Their support of actions undertaken took on many forms. Whereas in the beginning, many were concerned about becoming literate in both Ukrainian and English languages, women soon became the liaison between children's language and dance schools, taught Ukrainian embroidery and helped set a code of conduct for children and youth.

Overcoming prejudice and becoming more confident of their self worth, they were among the first to observe International Women's Day, urging women to pursue actions for equality and humane working conditions.

Although reluctant at first, their development soon evolved into more visible forms of militancy. Especially during the turbulent 30s. Their financial support was evident in collections for legitimate causes, preparations of hundreds of lunches for various affairs, for labour scrutineers during civic elections, for first communist alderman, M. Kolisnyk, during door-to-door collections for the Canadian Labour Defense league, for the On-to-Ottawa trekkers, and later in the Stockholm appeal, ban the bomb marches.

In a policy statement issued at the 7th WBA Convention in 1931, we note the early struggle for the implementation of social insurance, free medical aid, protection of mothers and children, universal old age pensions, etc. Pages of The Ukrainian Labour News of this period give a graphic portrayal of labour struggles - in which, regrettable, input from Ukrainian right organizations was notably absent, evoking more hostility towards them.

Prior to the closing of the Ukrainian Labour Temple and the banning of the ULFTA, women, too, were incensed when so-called "guests" were brought from

Western Ukraine - and espoused fascist ideology. This only helped polarize positions between left and right factions, provoking anger and fights and acrimonious reaction when grants and support from government bodies were given to nationalist organizations.

Political awareness and need for positive actions was a factor that prompted women to closely align themselves with the war effort, through work in the block committees, raising funds for the Red Cross, sale of Victory Bonds, sending parcels of comfort to Canadians in the armed forces, and for kinfolk in the ravaged former homeland.

A unique project undertaken by the Workers Benevolent Association was the opening of the old folks home and orphanage at Parkdale. Women gave unstinting support to this, the first home of its kind on the American continent. Sadly though, this project had to be abandoned because of financial difficulties. Applications to the government for assistance for this humanitarian project were denied.

The protracted struggle of the WBA, first to regain its provincial license and later to obtain a dominion charter, is a story in itself. This story reflected the resolve to keep the WBA in existence and not surrender to pressures for self-liquidation. It also was a factor in sharpening ideological differences.

We note that since early beginnings, women members were continually elected to positions on the National Committee. Amongst those who pursued action to obtain the dominion charter, five were women, of which I was one. Within the WBA structure, women not only acted on sick visiting committees, but many have become secretary treasurers of local branches. To date, three women have been elected National Treasurers. Although younger women have become involved, we still feel the lack of developing younger leadership cadre.

As to personal experiences, the one that greatly involved me was the confiscation of the Ukrainian Labour Temple and banning of the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association. Just having returned from the Canadian Youth Congress, I was confronted with a padlocked building in June 1940, and barred entry to the office where I worked in the WBA building, even though the WBA was not a banned organization. When I was finally permitted entry, under very close scrutiny of the custodian of the Western Trust Co., I was shocked by what I saw. The hall where the Ukrainian language school was conducted was in shambles -

portraits slashed to shreds, shelves broken, books, journals, periodicals wantonly torn and scattered. The same destruction was visible in the rest of the building. The chaos was unbelievable.

To obtain even simple pieces of stationery, I was obliged to sign for them. Because our national records and books had been carted away and stored in a cluttered basement room in the Legislature, I had to go there to write up the financial synoptic. Furthermore, the Manitoba government auditor, Lt. J. Harrison requested that I go down with him into the WBA archives several times, as he was determined to find evidence that the WBA financially supported banned organizations such as the communist party, as this would provide sufficient evidence to ban the WBA. After countless hours of futile search this approach was dropped. Throughout this hectic period, I must give credit to my husband, Mike Seychuk, who was most helpful, and who later became WBA secretary-treasurer. For me, a person who believed in justice, the impact of this viciousness and blatant discrimination only strengthened my determination to carry on. The support and loyalty of many, many members, also helped, though there were those who dropped out.

On another occasion, when I had been delegated to attend a convention of League of the American Ukrainians on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the USA, in 1976, I received a pink slip and was denied entry at the airport. During my short detention, I was guarded like a criminal by security who were fully equipped with all types of assault weaponry, and sent back to Canada, courtesy of the US government and unable to give my intended greetings to the person who was there to meet me. So, you see, the Cold War was still in progress.

In a few condensed remarks, it is difficult to portray the years of voluntary participation and devotion to the path undertaken by Ukrainian Socialists in overcoming prejudice and injustice, and in contributing to the promotion of development, civil liberties and justice. From the perspective of a lifelong active member, the proud legacy of Ukrainian socialists in the scheme of events is undeniable.

MARY SKRYPNYK

My involvement with the progressive left wing of the Ukrainian Canadian community began with my birth. My father arrived in Canada from the village of Kisiliv, Bukovyna, a 17-year-old lad in 1907. His experiences in Canada were similar to those experienced by thousands of immigrants who arrived in the first years of the 20th century. He began his working life in this country building streets in Montreal, then moved to the logging camps of Northern Ontario, worked a period of time in the silver mines of Cobalt where he met my mother, who like many hundreds of other girls arriving during those early years, worked as a housemaid for a well-to-do-family. She married my father when she was 18, after which they decided to move to Timmins where my father got work in the Hollinger gold mine, at that time, considered one of the largest in the world.

My mother came to Canada from the village of Hnizdychiv in Galicia in 1912. She was only sixteen years old and the only member of her family who emigrated to Canada. The mind boggles at the courage of these young people in coming to a country still a wilderness, without knowledge of the language, the customs, the social conditions that prevailed and which existed for their maximum exploitation in a developing country. They had no money when they came, no professional or specialized training - their chief endowment consisted of a strong pair of hands and high hopes of building for themselves a better life in a new land. Their expectations were hard to come by. The majority of these early settlers had to overcome un-looked for misfortunes as well as such social evils as economic exploitation, discrimination and racist humiliation.

My parents married in 1914. I was born a year later, and in time the eldest of four children. By that time my father and mother were already members of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party, my father being the most active in participation. He was also a member of the Miner's Union, IWW, which was already carrying on a struggle for the eight-hour day and higher wages. In the post World War period, a great number of Ukrainian émigrés were working in the gold mines of the area - Timmins and South Porcupine in particular. They participated in the general struggle to improve conditions for the miners - in working conditions especially, which were appalling, with little or no safety measures and the increasing spread of silicosis, the disease of the lungs that was caused by the inhalation of the silica dust and taking its toll of early death among the miners.

In 1918, after the October Revolution in Russia and the establishment of Soviet power, the Conservative government, reacting to the unstable situation in the world, began to suppress socialist ideas and actions and the danger arose that socialist parties, among them Ukrainian, could be banned.

Recognizing the danger, the leadership of the Ukrainian Party acted on a well-thought-out idea that a cultural-educational society be established besides the political party, together with a proposal that a centre be built in Winnipeg in which cultural-educational activities could be developed. This far-sighted decision led to the organization of the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association and the rapid growth of its branches across Canada. When the Association was formed in Timmins, my parents were among the first to join.

It was not unusual then, that as a family we became involved in the growth of the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association. When the Timmins Ukrainian Labour Temple was built in 1922, both my parents began to actively participate in its cultural and educational activities, taking executive positions in the branches, my mother after the Women's Branches were formed in 1922. We, their children, as we grew older, attended Ukrainian school, dance classes, and I, the eldest, regularly appeared in concerts with recitations taught me by my father.

Both my parents were literate and great lovers of Ukrainian literature. All available works by Ukrainian writers, particularly the classics - Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, Vasyl Stefanyk, Lesya Ukrainka, Marko Vovchok and others became part of our home library, and were read to us as we were growing up as well as entertaining us with oral dramatization of Ukrainian folk tales.

Growing up, all the above became part of my education and forming of my national and social consciousness, my values and further development as an adult.

In 1923, our family moved south to a farm in the Niagara peninsula. My parents continued their membership in the ULFTA, keeping contact with the Welland and Thorold branches. We left Timmins so that my father would avoid the risk of contracting silicosis.

In 1928 we suffered a family tragedy in the death of my mother at thirty-three years of age. I was only twelve and had just finished public school. Being the eldest, it fell to my lot to be the housekeeper. Life during those years was hard

and complicated, our farm being burdened by a heavy mortgage. Our difficulties increased when the economic crisis began in 1929. In spite of all this, we were determined to make our lives as good as possible.

When I was fifteen, the economic crisis compelled me to leave home in search of work. After three difficult months, I was finally able to get a job in a Hamilton tobacco company, a notorious sweat shop where 44 hours a week earned me $9.00 and after eight years when I quit, I was making $12.00 a week.

I consider my organizational activity began when I joined the Youth section of ULFTA in Hamilton. Although my formal education had been cut short, I strived to increase my learning in every way possible, using every opportunity to attend night classes, educationals conducted in the ULFTA. I was very taken with flying and made up my mind to become a pilot. Although the lessons were expensive, I succeeded in obtaining my pilot's license in 1937 and was the first woman to get a pilot's license in Hamilton. I derived a great deal of satisfaction from this activity. By and by, I began to take up parachute jumping and made two jumps.

My activity in the Youth Section of the ULFTA throughout this entire period consisted mainly in executive positions in the branch, in working with children and in the dance group. On the basis of these activities, it was proposed in 1938 that I attend the six month Higher Educational Course for the development of leadership in the ULFTA in Winnipeg. After some hesitation, I accepted the proposal, making a decision that was to change the whole course of my life. Since then I have been fully involved in the organizational life of the Ukrainian left-wing community. It gave me the opportunity to become acquainted with the leadership of the ULFTA, with people who helped and guided me in later years.

At the conclusion of the Higher Educational Course, I was assigned work in Winnipeg - to teach Ukrainian school in one of the suburbs. I also taught dancing and gymnastics and beginners music. During my two-year stay in Winnipeg, I helped with the work of the Youth Section of the ULFTA and with the preparation of manuals for children's activities. It was precisely the preparation of manuals for children that encouraged me to do more writing. I contributed articles to the English page in "Narodna Hazeta" (People's Gazette). It was this work that reawakened in me my love of Ukrainian literature which had been instilled in me when I was still a child.

My work and that of many others was interrupted by the Second World War, when the Canadian authorities banned the activities of the ULFTA. I went back to Hamilton and returned to work in the tobacco factory. When the management of the factory learned of my activities in Winnipeg, I was dismissed. Within a few days I was hired by the Otis Fensom Plant which had been converted to war work, producing the Bofor anti-aircraft gun. Here I became a member of the United Electrical Worker Union. I was shop steward of the department in which I worked and the union representative to the management committee. During my work there, I wrote articles to "Ukrainske Zhyttia" (Ukrainian Life) in Toronto for the special column, "Women's Work in the War Effort". In the autumn of 1943, after three years with Otis Fensom, I was invited to come to Toronto to work on a linotype in the print shop of "Ukrainian Life", which was then being edited by Steve Macievich, Peter Krawchuk and Philip Lysets. I accepted the offer and have been doing some aspect of organizational work ever since.

After the war, with the leadership of the ULFTA released from the concentration camps, both the press and the organization centre were moved from Winnipeg to Toronto. A Canada-wide campaign, supported by thousands of people, helped return the government confiscated properties of the ULFTA to the newly established Association of Ukrainian Canadians, later renamed Association of United Ukrainian Canadians. As branches as such did not exist during the war years, cultural activities continued with orchestras, folk dance groups and choirs continuing to meet. Much work was done in entertaining the troops in army camps and concerts to raise money for the Red Cross to help the humanitarian programs of the war effort, especially through the Ukrainian Association to Aid the Motherland, which eventually evolved into the Association of Untied Ukrainian Canadians.

An important decision at this time was the resolution to form English-speaking branches of the AUUC, a decision that met its share of criticism as did the establishment of an English language tabloid to meet the needs of the younger Canadian born descendants of the immigrant generation. Time has shown the correctness of this approach.

During this early post-war period, I studied ballet to help in teaching folk dance and worked in the local English-speaking branch of the organization, accepting various executive positions. Later, I was invited to work for the National Executive Committee of the AUUC and was made responsible for the children's and youth sector. When the tabloid newspaper, "The Ukrainian Canadian" began

publishing in 1947, special pages for children were included in the format and I became responsible for the preparation and editing of these pages.

In 1948-49, the National Executive of the AUUC sent me on an extended tour of Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. I spent from a month to six weeks in some localities where I helped strengthen the English-speaking branches, rebuild orchestras and dance groups, prepare regional and local music, song and dance festivals. When the Ukrainian Children's Camp was established in Palermo in 1950, I was made responsible for its operation during the first year.

This was the last purely organizational work that I did, because in the autumn of 1950 I began to work full-time as one of the editors of "The Ukrainian Canadian". It was also in 1950 that I was elected to the national Committee of the AUUC and remained a member until my retirement in 1991.

As a journalist and member of the National Executive Committee I was given the opportunity of spending two years, 1954-56, in Soviet Ukraine where I improved my knowledge of the Ukrainian language, history and literature.

This was my second trip to Ukraine as I was part of a group of four who represented the AUUC at the World Youth Festival in Berlin in 1951. While there we received an invitation to visit the Soviet Union by the All-Slav Committee in Moscow. We were the first Canadian-born Ukrainians to make this trip, unforgettable to this day, as the ravages of war were still very much in evidence at the time. Since then I have been privileged to take part in several International Congresses - the All-American Women's Congress in Cuba, a Peace Congress in Berlin and in the international festivities and seminars celebrating the anniversaries of Taras Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, and Ivan Franko in Ukraine, the most recent in September of 1995, marking a Mikhailo Kotsyubinsky anniversary.

These last I received through the kind invitations of Society Ukraina and the Ukrainian Writer's Union in acknowledgment of my work in translating Ukrainian literature into English. I began translating the Ukrainian classics and some contemporary writers as a regular contribution to our magazine, *"The Ukrainian Canadian"*. I strongly believe to this day on the importance of making the rich literary heritage of the Ukrainian people available to the English reader, and especially to the growing generations of Canadian born who with time and third and fourth generations and intermarriage have lost the use of the

language, but retain an interest in their cultural heritage and in the country of their forebears. I was truly taken aback when having purchased the third edition of Benet's Readers Encyclopedia, which prides itself on being the classic and only encyclopedia of world literature in a single volume, I discovered that it doesn't carry the name of a single Ukrainian writer. This most recent edition was published in 1987. This oversight merits serious thinking by Ukrainian intellectuals. My own efforts in this field brought a welcome response from the Dnipro Publishers in Kiev who began to commission the translation of certain works, which I was very happy to receive. All this led to very unexpected tokens of appreciation of my work in an invitation from the Writer's Union of the USSR to attend an International Translator's Conference of writers who translated works of the various republics of the USSR and were awarded the Maxim Gorky Prize for their work. It was held in Moscow and it was my good fortune to be awarded this prize at this prestigious gathering along with several others from different countries. This was in 1976. In 1986, the Presidium of the Writer's Union of Ukraine named me the Laureate of the Literary premium which carries the name of the great Ukrainian writer, Ivan Franko.

I was very moved by these tributes, for I received great satisfaction from translating the works of Ukrainian classics into English.

My work as a translator was not confined only to writers in Ukraine. It became a matter of ever greater importance that works written about the history of the Ukrainian labour-farmer movement and organizations in Canada be made available in English, not only for the Ukrainian Canadian community, but to Canadians as a whole. One of the most prolific writers in this genre is Peter Krawchuk and it gave me great pleasure to translate a number of his works into English. For anyone wishing to know the history of the Ukrainian labour-farmer organizations in Canada, I would recommend the literature displayed here: for the role of women, I recommend either the Ukrainian *"Zhinochi Dolyi"* or the English translation - *"Reminiscences of Courage and Hope"*, *"Nasha Stsena"* or the English translation, *"Our Stage"* which deals with the cultural achievements of our organization, *"Our Contribution to Victory"*, the war years, and finally, *"Our History, The Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Movement in Canada, 1907-1991"*. There are others, but these few will give you a very good picture of our contribution to Canadian life and development as part of the Canadian people.

ROZ USISKIN

I feel very honoured to be included in this morning's discussion. I feel very much at home here for I know that I am among old friends. Moreover, I feel connected to the Ukrainian Labour Temple and to the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians in several ways: 1) as a member of UJPO; 2) as a past executive-director of the Manitoba Multicultural Resources Centre; 3) and, as vice-president of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada. Very briefly, I would like to touch on all three areas as I feel they are pertinent to this morning's topic.

First, since very young, I have been a member of the United Jewish People's Order. UJPO is a national, fraternal, cultural and socialist oriented organization with branches in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. We have just celebrated the 70th anniversary of the organization at a convention in Toronto. I am pleased to report to you that we are beginning to see a new vitality developing in the national organization after a long hiatus. I draw your attention to this because in many ways UJPO and the AUUC are sister organizations. They have many similarities and have also experienced many of the same difficulties. Historically, these two organizations have fulfilled the same roles within their respective communities. Both organizations have catered to the needs of their working class immigrant membership providing various social benefits, such as medical care, and loan societies at a time when universal social assistance was but a vague dream. They have culturally enriched not only their own members but their wider communities as well, a legacy that still continues to this day even though with fewer numbers. Perhaps more fundamentally, the two organizations provided an ideological alternative that nurtured a clear vision of an egalitarian, socialist society. Similarly, the two organizations have borne the brunt of the McCarthy period, the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, all with devastating effects. This onslaught created a climate whereby both organizations turned inward, became isolated and insular. The rest, of course, is history, and I'm pleased to see that this area will be more fully examined at a later workshop.

We are slowly emerging from this nightmare. For example, in the last year, UJPO has opened a new branch in Montreal, in a part of Canada, where we on the left, suffered the greatest damage at the hands of Duplessis. Also, we have recruited new members here in Winnipeg. Perhaps more significant, in the last year the UJPO was accepted back into the Canadian Jewish Congress after being ousted 42 years ago when we opposed the rearmament.

I raise this past history because it is essential that we begin to re-assess positively our role and contribution in Canadian history. We must share these experiences with our children and grandchildren, experiences that will be vital to them when facing and confronting the new challenges in today's world. We must give them a sense of pride in their cultural identification as it has developed in the Canadian context and from a progressive viewpoint.

I have experienced this feeling of pride in our organization's record at our recent convention when we organized a mini exhibit documenting 70 years of UJPO history in Canada. Though small and incomplete, it nevertheless captured the vitality, the dynamics, the courage and the fortitude of the organization and its members. The enthusiasm of the young people in viewing the exhibit was heart warming. They were able to relate to their parents and grandparents in a way that made them proud, that gave them the courage to face the future with dignity and hope. In this way, preserving our heritage becomes a direct link between our past and our the future. It is our lifeline.

My second link to our discussion today was as a founding member, along with Nolan Reilly, of the Manitoba Multicultural Resources Centre which has been based at the University of Winnipeg. From 1983-89, I was MMRC's first Executive-Director. Its primary purpose, among other functions, was: to promote and advance studies into the history of all ethnocultural groups by members of the communities with cooperation from professionals and, to encourage the safekeeping and accessibility of archival materials and artifacts that are collected.

Our major effort to preserve the heritage of Manitoba's diverse cultural communities culminated in a major and unique exhibit called "Images Of Our Past: A Celebration of Manitoba's Peoples". The exhibit opened in Winnipeg in 1988 and travelled to many outlying areas in Northern and Western Canada. The exhibit was curated by Steve Prystupa of the Museum of Man and Nature and the Museum undertook to build and to produce the exhibit as well. Steve Prystupa is now in Ottawa with the Museum of Civilization.

As Executive-Director and as part of the project, I had the opportunity of familiarizing myself with each group's history, their collection of artifacts and archival materials. It was then that I learned first hand of the enormity and wealth of materials that were housed in this building. At the time, the material was not made available to the public as it had not been catalogued, indexed or stored in a manner suitable for research purposes. In my capacity as Executive-

Director and as a friend of the organization, I attempted to urge the leadership to make this a priority not only for the Winnipeg section but also for the national organization. While many in the leadership recognized the importance of this work, it took many years before this too became a reality. I am excited and happy that this symposium has been organized and is finally giving centre stage to preserving the past history of the Ukrainian progressive movement in Canada. It is a project of inestimable value.

The third link that brings me here today is my standing association with the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada. I have been a member of the organization for 20 of its 28 years of existence.

The Society is dedicated to recording the history and culture of the Jewish people of the Canadian West. It has an ongoing oral history program, to date we have completed 550 oral histories with people from all walks of life. At present we are involved in an extensive study to determine the best media to ensure that this important historical resource, now on tape, is preserved for future generations.

A major and unique project that we have developed is a newspaper database. This is an index of information taken from the local Yiddish and Anglo-English press from 1911 until the present. The database has proved to be an invaluable resource for genealogy and family histories. It has been especially useful to researchers, many from around the world, who have accessed our materials in researching various aspects of Jewish history. We are currently embarking on a major project to collect records that document the history of local Jewish musicians and musical groups, such as choirs, composers, artists, etc. We are also interested in documenting the kinds of music that families heard in their homes and that were used in our cultural centres. This is an important dimension in further enhancing our understanding of Jewish life in Western Canada.

Over the years, we have amassed a vast collection of photographs, documents, memorabilia, religious and community artifacts. We regularly present public lectures and issue publications on topics of Jewish interest. We have developed several major exhibits on the Jewish experience and the exhibits have been so successful that they have been seen in various Canadian centres as well as in Israel.

More recently, a Genealogical Institute as part of the JHS has been organized, in recognition of the current public interest in 'our roots'. The Institute has just

competed a major project photographing all the headstones in Winnipeg's Jewish cemeteries. The information gleaned from this project will be entered into our database and will become a useful resource.

A year ago summer, along with the Mennonite and Ukrainian Historical Societies of Manitoba, the JHS helped organize a major, national conference called "Building Bridges". This was a breakthrough conference bringing together three groups with different histories and experiences perhaps with but one thing in common. They all originated in Ukraine. The focus of the conference was to ascertain the groups similarities and differences, to determine their present relationships and to become familiar with each others histories and cultures. The conference brought together a distinguished group of academics, community activists and literary figures. The feedback from most attendees was that this was an extremely worthwhile conference and should be repeated in the near future.

I have drawn your attention to these various projects of the JHS to indicate to the Canadian Society for Ukrainian Labour Research the scope and range of projects that can be undertaken. Once you begin, there is a vast field out there, there is much that can be done. For those beginning to work in this area, let me assure you that the work is exciting, satisfying and rewarding. For your community, your efforts will have enormous benefits. For the larger Canadian society, your history will become known, evaluated and will be incorporated finally within the larger body of Canadian history. We will all be the richer for your efforts.

If I can be of help to you in any way, please feel free to call upon me. Thank you for inviting me and I wish you the very best of luck in your future endeavours.